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## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION CONVENES FOR FIRST MEETING**

**SACRAMENTO** – Today's inaugural meeting of the commission created by the voter-approved Prop. 63 marked a major milestone in the transformation of mental health services in California. Joined by California Health and Human Services Agency Secretary Kim Belshé and Department of Mental Health Director Stephen Mayberg, members of the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) previewed the Commission's charge at FOCUS, a South Sacramento outpatient program for severely emotionally disturbed children.

The MHSOAC's 16 independent, unpaid members oversee implementation of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), which was passed by voters in November 2004. The MHSA will expand proven mental health care programs for historically underserved populations, including children and the homeless. Prop. 63 funds support prevention services to help children, adults and seniors get care before a mental illness becomes disabling.

"Today, we are here to announce a significant first step in the transformation of the way that mental health care is conceptualized and delivered in California," said Secretary Belshé. "The 16 members of this Commission truly represent a cross-section of California. These individuals were chosen because of their experiences and the unique perspectives they bring to the Commission. With a diverse Commission, we hope to ensure that the delivery of mental health services in the state will not be 'business as usual.'"

"The Commission's launch marks a great opportunity to develop and advance mental health services," added Director Mayberg. "The right programs and services will enable us to bring treatment to those who need it most, and to offer preventative services to those who are at risk. When services are offered at this level, in the community, it means fewer people in institutions and on the streets. This Commission will help us achieve that goal in every corner of the state, and will help us create a working model for other states."

The MHSOAC's next meeting will be held in late July. For more information about mental health issues, how to combat the stigma associated with mental illness, or the MHSA, please log on to DMH's Website at [www.dmh.ca.gov](http://www.dmh.ca.gov).

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